

NRHS News

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

JULY 2020

2020 NRHS Heritage Grants - Recipients

By *ROBERT J. ERNST, Secretary NRHS*

The Heritage Grants Committee has made their selections for 2020. A total of \$48,100 was granted to sixteen organizations. Since 1991, the NRHS has provided a half million dollars to rail preservation efforts, through hundreds of grants to NRHS Chapters and other organizations not affiliated with the NRHS.

The NRHS Railway Heritage Grants Program provides financial support to projects that contribute to preservation of, and education about, railway history. This includes grants for stabilization and restoration of railroad equipment like steam locomotives and steam trains and diesel locomotives, railway buildings and for the preservation and archiving of historical records and train pictures. Although most grants in the past have been made for preservation activities, we also encourage projects in research, education, and publications.

The 2020 recipients include the following chapters, museums and other organizations.

- **Baltimore Streetcar Museum**, Baltimore MD. New upholstery for PCC car #26.
- **Boyce Railway Depot Foundation**, Boyce VA. Replace window panes on windows of RPO Museum in ex N&W depot.
- **Cape Cod Chapter NRHS**, West Barnstable MA. Restoration of 1945 NYNH&HRR Boxcar.
- **Center for Railroad Art and Photography**, Madison WI. Preserve Jim Shaughnessy photos.
- **Danbury Railway Museum**, Danbury CT. Canopy for former NH Mill Plain Railroad Station.
- **Friends of the NY Transit Museum**, Brooklyn NY. Archival preservation of NYC RR Valuation photos.
- **Hagerstown & Frederick Railroad Historical Society**, Frederick MD. New computer & software to catalog H&F archives.
- **Harrisburg Chapter NRHS**, Harrisburg PA. Repairs and painting of wood windows for PRR Harris Tower.
- **Hawaiian Railway Society**, Ewa HI. Replica OR&L freight shed to house a museum and archive.
- **National Museum of Transportation**, St. Louis MO. Repaint exterior of GM Aerotrains.
- **Nevada County Narrow Gauge Railway Museum**, Nevada City CA. Restore 1897 Florence & Cripple Creek coach.
- **Niagara Frontier Chapter NRHS**, North Tonawanda NY. Install wheelchair/handicap lift.
- **Southeastern RR Museum**, Duluth GA. Interior painting and upgrades to 1911 Pullman car "Superb".
- **St. Albans Museum**, St. Albans VT. Preserve Central of Vermont Documents
- **Susquehanna Valley Railway Historical Society (NRHS)**, Binghamton NY. Relocate extensive collection of historical railroad material.
- **Twin Forks Chapter NRHS**, Ronkonkoma NY. Restore Ex LIRR/B&M coach

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Important Notices

The 2020 NRHS Convention is cancelled due to the health pandemic. Our convention partners are uncertain if they will be open and/or available to attendees. The NRHS has issued refunds to members who had registered for the 2020 Convention.

The 2020 NRHS Fall Conference (Johnson City TN) and 2021 NRHS Spring Conference (Raleigh NC) are cancelled. Be in good health and keep your eye down the line until we meet again.

Upcoming Conferences and Conventions

2021	October, 2021
2021 NRHS Convention	2021 NRHS Fall Conference
(date, location to be confirmed)	Ronkonkoma, New York

Submission Deadlines

Month	Print or .pdf	Deadline
August 2020	.pdf	July 15, 2020
September 2020	Print / mail	August 15, 2020

Membership Matters, July 2020

By HUGH HARRIS, Potomac Chapter NRHS & Membership Administrator NRHS

We continue our progress through this pandemic altered world – and just hope that we can keep our families, our friends, our hobbies, and ourselves together! We're trying to deal with the changes brought about by our Vendor, NeonCRM, in whichever way will provide the Society with the best long-term solution.

Here is a summary of the current situation. Our database is operated, and the technology is maintained, by a company based in Chicago, Illinois, called NeonCRM. The information in the database is maintained by volunteers; I am the leader and organizer of that effort. We had agreed with Neon that all our financial transactions would be handled by PayPal, with which we have had a continuous relationship for ten or fifteen years. PayPal was fully integrated with Neon, so it was simple for a Member, once finding the way into Neon, to renew and/or update Membership and information.

In December 2019, Neon informed us that they would terminate their relationship with PayPal at the end of January, 2020, so we would need to transfer all our financial transactions to their new processor 'NEONPAY.' This was unacceptable to us, so we terminated the financial transaction part of our agreement, moved all renewals back to our website, and continued to use PayPal for their processing.

Our webmaster and the contractor who works with her to do a lot of the coding rebuilt the website and created the ability to handle both New Memberships and Membership Renewals on-line. They also linked our website to PayPal so the transactions could be handled financially. The only negative aspect is that it requires a volunteer to download a spreadsheet from PayPal and then manually enter the information to the Neon database.

We have looked at a number of alternatives and none is attractive for a variety of reasons:

- There are a number of other companies, similar to Neon, operating in the US. Some are headquartered here; others have head offices in China, Canada, Europe, and Russia. None of them offers any more stability than Neon.
- There are several much larger and more stable database operators in the US, but they simply aren't really interested in an organization as small as NRHS. Our fees run at 10% of the amount that they really consider a minimum annual fee, so we're left out in the cold.
- We could go the "do-it-yourself" route. Buy a software package, establish the staff to manage and run the operation, and proceed from there. The problem that I see is that there is no way to do that with an all-volunteer labor force. It would require at least one dedicated manager and the cost would probably run up to more than 10 times what we currently pay.
- The last alternative, and the one I think is the preferred one, is to continue as we are but to look at automating part of the data transfer from PayPal to Neon. Neon has an "Import" feature where one can bring data into Neon from external sources. I am currently discussing with Neon personnel how we can use that feature to import the data from PayPal into Neon.

I am sure that very few of you are really interested in all this detail but I thought it important to allow you to see what goes on behind the scenes as we continue to bring you the access to railroad history that you want. I also wanted everyone to know why we sometimes seem to be rather slow in completing entries or responses. We're having to deal with things like this that take many hours to research and then to decide what will be the best approach for the long run, for the Society.

We'll continue to try to keep all Members informed on what is happening in the Society. Good Railfanning to all!

I Miss that Caboose

By JOHN COWGILL, DC Chapter NRHS

Editor's note: Many thanks to John Cowgill for permission to reprint this article. It originally appeared in *John Cowgill: Stories of the Railroad* at <https://johncowgillstoriesoftherailroad.com/2020/04/23/i-miss-that-caboose/>.

There you are in the car. You come upon the railroad crossing. The lights come on, and the gates go down. You hear the horn. The locomotives come, and then many train cars roll by. Then, there it is. You see the caboose. The train is now gone.



For over a hundred years the caboose was at the end of the train signaling that the train had gone by. While the locomotives pulled the train, the caboose was at the end. Because the trains were long, the engineers in the locomotives could not see the end of the trains. Men in the caboose were there just in case something went wrong they could radio the engineer and vice versa. With new technologies, the caboose became obsolete. They were removed from the end of the train.

What happened to the cabooses? Some were sent to museums. Some were sent to parks where they are displayed in the parks or by old train stations or by rail trails. Some became hotels. Some were sent to the scrap yard. Some were just left to rust.



*PHOTOS COURTESY OF JOHN CARGILL
C&O CABOOSE – Number 90219 of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway on display at the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Heritage Center in Clifton Forge, Virginia.*

.Let us remember the old caboose. Let us remember the railroad days of old. May the old caboose never be forgotten.



*PHOTOS COURTESY OF JOHN CARGILL
CHESSIE CABOOSE – Chessie System Number 903503 on display in the town of Rainelle, West Virginia.*



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JOHN CARGILL

STOP, LISTEN, LOOK, LINGER – The last caboose is on display in Caboose Park in Wyomissing, Pennsylvania.

2020 NRHS Election Ballot Due by Aug. 1st !

By JOSEPH C. MALONEY JR, Vice President NRHS & Chair 2020 NRHS Electoral Committee

By now, you should have received your ballot for the 2020 elections.

If you have already returned your ballot, then we thank you. If not, please take a minute to fill out the ballot, and return it to us in the pre-addressed envelope that we provided.

Your ballot has to be returned no later than August 1, 2020 to be counted.

Sometime around September 1, 2020, we will announce the election results to the full NRHS membership.

Thank you for participating in the NRHS 2020 election.

Washington State Guidebook, circa 1912

By *ARLEN L. SHELDRAKE, Pacific Northwest Chapter*

With the “lock down” in place, one suddenly has lots of spare time to read a book or two or watch some DVDs, organize rail pictures or clean out some closets. As I'm sure some will agree, years of closet accumulation has a tendency to overwhelm.

One of the books that we discovered in our cleaning was *The Guardians of the Columbia* by John H. Williams published in Tacoma. This 1912 book was cherished by my Mother as it was sent to her parents, Purl & Della (Latham) Sheirbon in Iowa prior to their eventual move to Odell, Oregon in February 1921. The 142-page hardbound book is chock full of photos (200), eight in color, with a clear intent to sell people on and entice them to the lower Columbia River area. My mother noted in the book that she had it rebound in 1991; clearly it was a keepsake to her. It appears that this 1912 book has been reprinted in 2015 and is available from Powell's City of Books.

In the back of the book, in the notes section is, what I think, an interesting insight into the ways in 1912 to travel from Portland to the book's areas highlighted below.

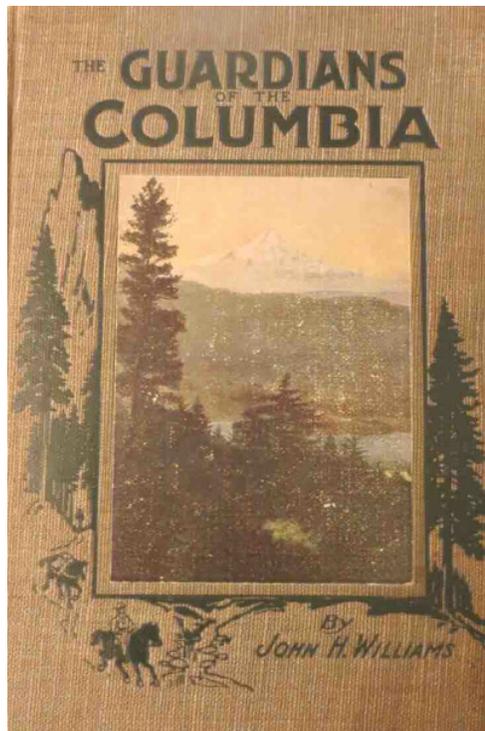
Transportation Routes, Hotels, Guides, etc.

The trip from Portland to north side of Mount Hood is made by rail (Oregon-Washington Ry. & Nav. Co. from Union Station) or boat (The Dalles, Portland & Astoria Nav. Co. from foot of Alder street) to Hood River, Ore. (66 miles), where automobiles are taken for Cloud Cap Inn, \$5.00. Round trip, Portland to Inn and return, by rail, \$1.90; by boat, \$1.00. Auto fare, Hood River to the Inn, \$5.00. Round trip, Portland to Inn and return, by rail, \$12.50; by boat, \$12.00, Board and room at Cloud Cap Inn, \$5.00 a day, or \$30.00 a week. Accommodations may be reserved at Travel Bureau, 69 Fifth street.

To Government Camp, south side of Mount Hood (56 miles), the trip is made by electric [rail] cars to Boring, Oregon, and thence by automobile. Cars of the Portland Railway, Light & Power Co., leave First and Alder streets for Boring (fare 40 cents), where they connect with automobiles (fare to Government Camp, (\$5.00). Board and room at Coalman's Government Camp hotel, \$3.00 a day, or \$18.00 a week.

Guides for the ascent of Mt. Hood, as well as for a variety of side trips, may be engaged at Cloud Cap Inn and Government Camp. For climbing parties, the charge is \$5.00 per member. The trip to Mount Adams is by Spokane, Portland & Seattle (“North Bank”) Railway from North Bank station or by boat (as above) to White Salmon, Wash., connecting with automobile or stage for Guler or Glenwood. Fare to White Salmon by rail, \$2.25; round trip, \$3.25; fare by boat, \$1.00. White Salmon to Guler, \$3.00. Board and room at Chris Guler's hotel at Guler P.O., near Trout Lake, \$1.50 a day, or \$9.00 a week. Similar rates to and at Glenwood. At either place, guides and horses may be engaged for the mountain trails (15 miles to the snow-line). Bargain in advance.

The south side of Mount St. Helens is reached by rail from Union Station, Portland, to Yacolt (fare \$1.30) or Woodland (\$1.00), where conveyances may be had for Peterson's ranch on Lewis River. To the north side, the best route is by rail to Castle Rock (fare, \$1.90), and by vehicle thence to Spirit Lake. Regular guides for the mountain are not to be had, but the trails are well marked.



Continuing Your Rail Hobby 'At Home'

By AL WEBER, President, National Railway Historical Society

Around St. Louis MO, the COVID-19 pandemic is still under control. However, in many parts of the US and the world, the pandemic is still high. Many chapter meetings are now held "virtually" through the Internet. I have attended a few; they mostly work well. Do you feel technology-challenged? We all have friends who can help us become familiar and comfortable with this new approach for meetings and get-togethers. My chapter used the "GoToMeeting" tool to meet virtually for two months so far; overall, it has worked well. We even gained new faces at the online meetings! Several members attended virtually who had previously been limited by driving distance or meeting time.

Meeting virtually is different from face-to-face, but it is a good alternative. Those members who have become more mature (not older) are in the high-risk group for the pandemic. A virtual meeting space allows us to gather and meet safely, with less risk of

exposure to the pandemic. Also, please remember to stay in touch and check in with your friends. Given the need for social distancing, a kind, thoughtful phone call may be the best part of a family member's or friend's day.

Many NRHS members work or volunteer at museums. Due to the pandemic, museums are losing their prime-time revenue this year. Not having visitors, birthday parties, or fund-raising events negatively affect museum operating revenue and future funding. Museums are essential to getting the message out about rail history and preservation. Museums are a way of attracting and finding new members. When the pandemic's travel restrictions are lifted, please consider visiting and supporting your local railroad museum. Be kind, be safe, and be healthy. Al Weber
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Editor's Notes

By VALLI HOSKI, Editor, NRHS News, & member North Texas Chapter, NRHS

NRHS Chapter resilience is amazing and understated. In these pandemic days, we hear of the resilience of states, cities, towns, schools, families. Amateur and hobby groups do not appear on that list. We have reason to celebrate the passion, creativity, and resilience of our Chapters.

Hobbies and projects, whether large or small, give us a goal to pursue and a task to complete well done. Personal satisfaction is often reward enough for many hobbyists. Be it your model collection, artifacts, ephemera, photographs, or rare mileage videos, every rail enthusiast has an abundance of tales and tracks to share.

Over time, our interest in the hobby and collections may wane. Models get dusty, stories of this locomotive, that finely painted set of coaches, these vintage dining plates, those rare photographs - all might not be as fun or enjoyable as they used to be. The hobby may change, from train shows, rail-fest tables stacked high with track, parts, switches and more, now to media shows using the latest in digital arts and technology. The hobby's heart is still strong - the trains, railroads, history, preservation, and your bragging rights too.

In these rough times, hobbies hold us together, reassure and comfort us. People (not track, rails, or artifacts alone) are important, and provide the human touch of the hobby. Virtual chapter meeting, virtual tour, virtual sharing of a favorite rail chasing video, the virtual faces are what matter most. What's a good paint job on a lovingly maintained EMD F1 model without a story to share and someone to share the story with? That's where our resilience is demonstrated.

To see resilience in action, browse through recent issues of the *NRHS News*. Each virtual program, meeting, tour, story of a collection, list of virtual rail experiences to view - all are within virtual reach for us. Organizations, such as the Center for Railroad Photography and Art (<http://www.railphoto-art.org/>) or the Baltimore and Ohio Museum (<http://www.borail.org/jrjunction.aspx>) provide flexible access to virtual 'conversations' and articles.

Celebrate resilience! Share a virtual exhibit, story time, chapter tour with friends or family. Provide the human touch, reach out to virtually enjoy and share our hobby!

The *NRHS News* is published nine times a year by the National Railway Historical Society. Valli Hoski, North Texas Chapter NRHS, Editor. Alex Mayes, Potomac Chapter NRHS, content and editorial assistant. Stephen L. Wasby, copy editing services. Send items to: *NRHS News*, c/o Valli Hoski, P.O. Box 234, York Springs, PA, 17372. E-mail: <NEWS@NRHS.COM>. Phone 717-398-0430. The address for the Society is: National Railway Historical Society, Inc., 505 South Lenola Road, Suite 226, Moorestown, NJ 08057. All membership information changes should be sent to Hugh Harris <hughrharris@aol.com>.